The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 MILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1661 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 6

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Please stand by while we turn over a rock and expose some slimy creatures to the light. It isn't an edifying sight but the exposure may be a good thing for America.

The rock is called the "Christian American Association." It is located in Houston, Tex. Under its fair name live anonymous and loathsome grubs who profane the name of religion and freedom to further the same ends as Hitler professes.

This "Christian American Association" has fathered and pushed into law in the States of Texas and Mississippi an act which deprives workers of their basic rights under the guise of forbidding "violence." The association was defeated in its efforts to enact an identical law in Louisiana last year but it is renewing its campaign there and starting new ones in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, North Carolina and Tennessee.

We do not know what connection exists between this outfit and Senator Lee O'Daniel of Texas, but it is significant that this Senator has introduced the same bill in the Congress of the United States and is carrying on an active speaking campaign to press for its adoption by State Legislatures in the South.

Behind The Pious Mask

Now let's look a little closer at this "Christian American Association." We have come across some of its "literature" which was circulated among the members of the Louisiana State Legislature. Protesting against the defeat of its anti-union bill, the association declares:

"From now on, white women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes whom they will have to call 'brother' or lose their jobs."

This, mind you, is said and written at a time when our nation is at war against those who preach intolerance and race hatred.

But the "Christian American Association," which dares to cloak its evil purposes behind a mask of piety, does not hesitate to prostitute the Four Freedoms to serve its own ends. It says:

"You want every individual to have complete freedom to worship or not to worship as he desires. That is one of the Four Freedoms. This is written about a fifth freedom—the freedom of enterprise, the freedom from economic slavery."

Although the Association's bill is supposed merely to banish violence in labor disputes, its true anti-labor purpose is revealed in the very propaganda issued to support the measure. The Association says:

"Every man should be free to join—or not to join."

There is not a word in the bill about Negroes, but the Association describes its effects as follows:

"It would implement the power of our peace officers to quell disturbances and keep the color line drawn in our social affairs."

We believe that these quotations are sufficient to reveal the true nature of the "Christian American Association" and identify it as just another form of the Ku Klux Klan.

Thorough Investigation Needed

Now what can be done about it? The Association is still in business and going great guns. It did not fold up when its bill was defeated in Louisiana. On the contrary, it announced:

"A skirmish was lost at Baton Rouge but the battle will be decided by the people of Louisiana. The principles for which we stand never change. Legislature sometimes do."

Well, the Legislature of Louisiana pointed the way when it adopted last June a concurrent resolution demanding Federal investigation of the "Christian American Association."

The resolution pointed out that Hitler and Goebbels had boasted that it would not be difficult for them to destroy national unity in America, that they considered it a simple matter to "set capital against labor, Negro against white, Catholic against Protestant, and Christian against Jew." It stated that the Association had "harassed, annoyed and threatened" members of the State Legislature for the promotion of legislation which would "create animosity, antagonism and unrest among the employers and employees of this State and interfere with the harmonious relations of capital and labor."

For these reasons the Legislature called upon the Department of Justice, the F.B.I. and the Dies Committee to investigate the "Christian American Association of Houston, Tex.," and determine whether it is "conducting subversive activities in the United States to investigate the sources of its funds" which money may have come from Hitler, Mussolini, the Emperor of Japan or any other source hostile to the interest of the people of the United States.

To our knowledge, no such investigation has been made. It should be undertaken at once. The results should be made public. We earnestly support the demand of the Louisiana State Legislature for immediate and thorough official inquiry into the "Christian American Association" and all its works.

Green Says 'Equal Rights' Bill Would Endanger Women Workers

Washington, D. C. — President William Green announced that the American Federation of Labor will oppose the enactment by Congress of Senate Joint Resolution No. 25 and other similar pending legislation proposing a Constitutional Amendment providing for "equal rights" for women.

"Such a Constitutional Amendment," Mr. Green said, "would place in jeopardy all laws protecting women in industry. At this time, when women are being recruited for jobs in war production plants in ever increasing numbers, the 'equal rights' Amendment would be particularly dangerous and harmful.

"The American Federation of Labor sympathizes with and supports the efforts of women's organizations to remove from the statute books various laws discriminating against women as to property, guardianship, naturalization and other rights granted to men. We advocate specific measures to wipe out such discriminations.

"But a Constitutional Amendment is not necessary, to be drawn in general terms allowing no reservations. Therefore, if it is adopted, the validity of existing laws limiting the hours of work for women and otherwise protecting women in industry, would be subject to judicial assault.

"We cannot afford to have these industrial safeguards tossed overboard now. They are necessary to conserve womanpower and to assure maximum war production at peak efficiency. The 'equal rights' Amendment, despite its praiseworthy objectives, might result in sapping that strength and destroying the useful laws providing safeguards and protection for the women workers. For this reason, the American Federation of Labor, which numbers many hundreds of thousands of women in its ranks, will oppose this legislation to the limit."

FPC Chairman Charges Power Trust Has Opened Campaign Against Labor

St. Louis.—Charges that the power trust has started a new campaign to destroy labor's rights and do away with publicly owned utilities were made by Chairman Leland Olds of the Federal Power Commission.

Spending enormous sums on newspaper and radio advertising, the power companies are disrupting national unity in a drive to return monopolies to the position they held prior to New Deal reforms, Olds said.

"These great economic powers," Olds asserted, "that opposed the TVA, the REA, the Bonneville administration and seek the disfranchisement of labor, are the great war profiteers. Unity an opportunity to serve their private interests.

"They have blatantly reiterated their program in thousands of newspapers and magazines. They offer private enterprise' by which they mean an end to the REA and the TVA's and Wagner acts, and all other efforts by the people to control their economic lives and destinies.

"Those interests are trying to sow the seeds of discord between agriculture and labor. Their future and labor. This attempt is designed to undo the progress which both farmers and workers have made under the New Deal. It is part of the well known principle of divide and conquer.

"Workers on the land and in the industrial centers must realize their interdependence if they are to prevent the united action which will not only win the war but also offer greater security and abundance to our people."

4,000 CHILDS EMPLOYES GRANTED WAGE INCREASE

New York.—Wage increases ranging from 42 to $2.25 a week have been approved by the War Labor Board for 4,000 employes of the Childs Company restaurant chain in New York City, it was announced by Local 42, Chain Service Restaurant Employes Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor.

The wage increase, the first granted to any union in the culinary industry in New York, is retroactive to Oct. 1, 1942, when the agreement was reached with the company. The increases will total about $300,000 in 1943, according to James Mulrooney, president of the union.

"Labor For Victory" Hails British

Washington, D. C.—The AFL "Labor For Victory" radio program on Sunday, Feb. 14 will present interviews with three outstanding leaders of British labor who have come to this country to consult with representatives of the American Federation of Labor on a joint program to help win the war.

The guest speakers, all of whom represent the British Trades Union Congress, are Frank Wolstencroft, of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers; Harry Harrison, president of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Unions Federation, and John Marchbank, of the National Union of Railway Men.

They will discuss labor conditions in Great Britain, their impressions of America's war effort, the possibilities of wider cooperation between the labor movements of both nations and the opinions of organized labor on what the post-war program should provide.

The radio program will follow the conclusion of the conferences in the nation's capital of the Joint Committee of the American Federation of Labor and the British Trades Union Congress, for which the British labor leaders came to this country. Be sure to listen in at 1:15 P.M. E.W.T. on Sunday, Feb. 14.

Manpower Controls Put In Effect In 32 New "Labor Shortage" Areas

Washington, D. C.—Paul V. McNutt announced that the War Manpower Commission would take control of the hiring of labor in 32 shortage areas, a step expected to keep millions of persons at their jobs in war industries.

Under the system, the chairman said, the Manpower Commission or agencies approved by it would furnish workers to employers on a priority system based on the importance of the employer in the war effort. New workers would be raised to movement workers shifting from vital occupations to less essential ones, and limits would be placed on the authority of employers to discharge workers assigned to them through the Manpower Commission.

WMC officials emphasized that no one would be negroed irrevocably in any particular job or even in any line of work, if he had "good reasons" to leave, but one aim of the controls was to prevent persons from leaving war work for nonessential jobs without being considered inefficient.

Nothing in the regulations would prevent a man from being promoted or, for example, increasing from a low-paying job to a higher-paying one in his factory.

However, the officials said, an apt is procedure would function to prevent workers' raids, and "the programs will be operated in a democratic way with full regard to local conditions and with the advice of local leaders of management and labor."

The controls, it was stated, would go into effect "as soon as practicable" in 32 areas, which are scattered throughout the country and are classified as "critical labor shortage areas." Officials said that many other areas, where shortages threaten can be brought under similar controls in the discretion of the WMC's 12 regional directors.

The principal hiring operations will be handled through the United States Employment Service, but the order directed maximum utilization of "all existing hiring channels" which would operate under WMC policy regulations.

Specifically mentioned as such "channels" were private employment agencies, professional organizations, schools, technical institutions and government agencies.

The hiring agencies are directed to do these things:

1. Refer workers to jobs which will utilize their skills most effectively in the war effort."

2. Accord priority to employers engaged in essential activities, in the order of the urgency of their activities.

3. Place workers in jobs on the basis of their qualifications and without discrimination as to race, color, creed, sex, national origin or, except as required by law, citizenship.

Mr. McNutt published the following list of cities designated as areas of critical labor shortage.

Buffalo, N. Y.; Beaumont, Tex.; Portsmouth, N. H.; Somerville, N. J., and Sterling, Ill., appeared as new additions, with Elizabeth, N. J.; Camden, N. J.; Newport, R. I., and Sturgeon Bay, Wis., which were on the last list, were dropped.

Other cities listed were Akron and Dayton, Ohio; Baltimore and Elkton, Md.; Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain and Waterbury, Conn.; Brunswick and Macon, Ga.; Buffalo, N. Y.; Charleston, S. C.; Cheyenne, Detroit, Hampton Roads, Va.; Las Vegas, Nev.; Manitowoc, Wis.; Mobile, Ogden, Utah; Panama City, Fla.; Pascagoula, Miss.; Portland, Ore.; San Diego, Seattle, Springfield, Mass.; Washington and Wichita.

It was indicated that other cities would probably be added to the list and that some might be dropped as their labor problems became less acute.

Strikes Cut To Lowest Figure In 1942

Washington, D. C.—Due to the cooperation of organized labor, time lost due to strikes in 1942 was reduced to one-fourth the average of the preceding five years of peace, the National War Board announced.

The board said that strikes in war industries last year caused a loss of six days for each ten thousand days worked. Thus the time lost due to strikes was cut down to six one-hundredths of one per cent of time worked. In the last two months of the year, even this notable record was improved to three-hundredths of one per cent.

Preliminary figures for both war and non-war industries showed that the number of stoppages totaled 3,000 during the year, but most of them were of very brief duration. A total of 825,000 workers was involved.

Comparative figures cited by the NWLB showed that in England there were 1,281 strikes involving 349,000 workers and indirectly affecting another 105,000 employes during the same period. It was pointed out that Britain's population is one-third that of the United States. Furthermore, Great Britain is in the midst of the war theater.

AFL Union Rolls Up Large Majority - At Western Cartridge Co. Election

East Alton, Ill.—Production and maintenance workers at Western Cartridge Company gave the American Federation of Labor a decisive majority in a two-day National Labor Relations Board election. The AFL received 5,461 of all the votes cast; District No. 50 of the United Mine Workers received 1,041 and no union, 1,783.

With a separate election AFL was again victorious by a vote of 50 to 7 no union at the Equitable Powder Company, subsidiary of Western Cartridge Company.

The election climaxed a two year organizing drive at the Cartridge Plant with NLRB hearings and long series of conferences with the War Labor Board representatives both here and in Washington.

Bitterly opposed to organized labor, Western Cartridge officials used all the power they could command to defeat the drive for a union. The plant was organized on craft basis and a council of crafts will be the system established for collective bargaining.

Fred Gids, AFL organizer, who was in charge of the campaign, will immediately start an organizing campaign at Owens-Illinois Glass Company, Alton, Illinois, and several other plants in this area.

Ben Tillett Dies; Veteran British Labor Leader Was 82 Years Old

London.—Ben Tillett, veteran trades union leader and former Member of Parliament, died in a hospital here, it was announced.

Ben Tillett led the fight for the welfare of the dockers or longshoremen of Great Britain for almost half a century. He served as secretary of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland from its inception in 1887 to its amalgamation with the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1922, continuing with the latter union.

Mr. Tillett was a pioneer organizer of the General Federation of Trades Unions, the National Transport Workers' Federation, the National Federation of General Workers and the International Transport Workers' Federation.

His interests as a militant labor organizer spread beyond England and he was ejected from Hamburg and Antwerp after attempts to organize the longshoremen of those cities.

His youngest career, Mr. Tillett made two lecture tours through the British Empire and several in the United States.

News Briefs

NAVY YARD WORKERS COMMENDED BY BARD

Washington, D. C.— Skilled craftsmen in the nation's navy yards are playing a key role on the "production front" to help win the war, according to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Ralph A. Bard.

Secretary Bard paid tribute to the workers in an address at an "old timers' night" celebration held by Columbia Lodge No. 174, one of the biggest locals in the International Association of Machinists. The lodge represents machinists at the Washington Navy Yard, a public government units in the capital area.

Mr. Bard declared navy yard workers have done a splendid production job and said the veteran union machinists have been particularly valuable as "instructors" in training the vast number of new workers. He also voiced confidence that, with the workers' help, America will win a sweeping triumph in the war. "They may bomb us, torpedo us, blow us into the waters, but we'll come through it all, and we won't blow up this side of victory," he said.

MEMBERS OF UNION SAVE 100 PLANES FROM FLOOD

Washington, D. C.—The War Production Board's Press Relations Service revealed that one hundred army and navy planes were saved from a flood in Lock Haven, Pa., by members of the International Association of Machinists at the risk of their own lives.

Because the 10 pilots employed by the Piper Aircraft Co. were unable to handle all the planes, 25 unionists, who had learned to fly on their own time, left assembly lines to fly the planes to higher ground. Seventy-five other AFL members acted as ground crews while others plunged into the flooded plant to drag the planes to where they could be taken out.

H. C. ILER ASSIGNED TO WMC HEADQUARTERS

Washington, D. C.—Henry C. Iler, former director of labor relations at the National Cash Register Corporation, has been assigned to the office of the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission on loan from the NYA.

Prior to his appointment with NYA Mr. Iler served as chief organizer for the Montreal Federation of Government Employees.

ILLINOIS UNIONS SHOW WAY TO VICTORY

Chicago.—AFL unions in Illinois are proud of their war record for the following reasons:

Thirty-five unions affiliated with the Building Trades Council purchased 20 million dollars worth of war bonds. The BTC also presented President Roosevelt with a check for $100,000 to purchase a bomber. The Teamsters Joint Council bought over a million dollars in bonds.

The Bakery wagon drivers' union gave the government a check for $20,000 to buy a fleet of ambulances. The union also gave the city OCD $4,000 for an ambulance. Radio Station WCFL, AFL-owned and -operated, donated time to the extent of over $5,000.

The membership of the Laundry & Dye House Cleaners Union has invested $50,000 in bonds. It also gave $10,000 to the army's bomber fund. The flat janitors' union—10,000 members—played a major role in making Chicago first in metropolitan area scrap drives. They also bought $1,000,000 in bonds.

WAR WRITER PRAISES AMERICAN WORKERS

Detroit. — Quentin Reynolds, war correspondent who has seen England, France, Russia and Africa in the grips of war, challenges Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's views on the patriotism and record of American workers.

In an address to the Detroit businessmen, Reynolds said:

"I understand that lately it has become quite popular to give labor a kick in the pants. I don't know if my friend Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker has seen. But I know that I've seen 20 times or more these months ago and I've seen hundreds of plants in Russia and England and in other spots on this globe.

"And I say that nowhere in the world is quite equal to the way working as hard as it is right here in America."

AFL-CIO Put Wage Crisis Up To F.D.R.; Demand Tighter Lid On Food Prices

"Little Steel" Formula Unworkable With Living Costs Soaring Out of Bounds, Leaders Say

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor bluntly notified President Roosevelt that unless the Government clamps the lid down on the persistently increasing cost of living, wages of American workers will have to be increased accordingly.

The President gave AFL President William Green and CIO President Philip Murray a sympathetic hearing when they went before him to present their joint views on this all-important subject.

The labor leaders told the President that the cost of food and other necessities of life is soaring "out of bounds." They declared that wages cannot be stabilized by general freeze or kept within the "Little Steel" formula of the National War Labor Board unless living costs are held down.

They advised the President that the "Little Steel" formula is now out of date, and too rigid and inflexible to protect American workers from economic injustice.

At the same time they emphasized that it is not the desire of the AFL and the CIO to take any action which would upset the Administration's wage stabilization program.

The labor leaders reminded the President that the trade union movement had accepted the wage formula reluctantly and only on the promise that living costs would be stabilized along with wages.

The "Little Steel" formula provided that wages could be increased 15 per cent over levels obtaining on Jan. 1, 1941. That figure was based on an estimated increase in living costs of about 15 per cent between Jan. 1, 1941, and May, 1942.

However, even official statistics show that the cost of living has mounted at the rate of one-half of one per cent a month from last May to date and the experience of workers in cities all over the country shows that these statistics sadly underestimate the actual hike in prices for necessary commodities.

No indication was given by the President as to what he intends to do about the wage problem, but officials of the National War Labor Board made it clear that they believed the "Little Steel" wage formula would have to be revised.

The AFL and CIO leaders let it be understood that their position could not be changed or held in keep in accord with John L. Lewis' demand a general $2 a day wage increase for members of the United Mine Workers regardless of any other considerations.

Nor was there any indication on their part that AFL or CIO unions would be encouraged to follow the Lewis drive.

One result of the conference with the President is expected to be a stiffening of the lines against further price increases for articles of food and clothing. Another expected development is the extension of the rationing program, which organized labor advocates as the only fair and democratic method of sharing the available supply of scarce articles among the entire population.

Landis Cites D. C. Central Body For Civilian Defense Record

Washington, D. C.—Director James M. Landis of the Office of Civilian Defense bestowed high praise on the Washington, D. C., Central Labor Union for the valuable assistance rendered by its 200,000 loyal AFL members in supporting the defense program for the nation's capital.

Mr. Landis announced he plans to cite the work of this central labor union, in training more than $100,000 for national defense activities and for its volunteer aid to the OCD program as a noteworthy example for other AFL central bodies to follow. In a letter to John Locher, president of the Washington Central Labor Union, Mr. Landis said:

"The outstanding contribution which the Washington Central Labor Union has made to the civilian defense in the metropolitan area has impressed me forcibly on a number of occasions. As Director of the Office of Civilian Defense, I would like to commend your organization, its officers and its delegates for the volunteer assistance and the funds they have provided for nearly every aspect of the local defense program.

"Many American Federation of Labor unions elsewhere undoubtedly have heard of the activities of your organization in a general way, but the details seem to me important enough to call to their special attention. That is why the Office of Civilian Defense is writing this work to affiliates of the AFL throughout the country, citing the work which the Washington Central Labor Union has done in connection with the defense council of the metropolitan area and including a recently published story which describes these activities in full.

"The notable effort put forth by the Civilian Defense Committee of the Washington Central Labor Union and its affiliated unions has a significance which goes beyond its importance to the nation's capital. It demonstrates that the labor movement can make most accurate efficiency of the organizations of the people have a full voice in the community's defense effort."

Maintain Forty-Eight Hour Week For Maximum Output, Green Urges

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor urged that America's work week be kept at 48 hours in a speech commemorating the February issue of the American Federationist. Mr. Green said:

"Experience shows that unduly long hours are invariably followed by increased absenteeism due to fatigue. While the home front and Germany long work weeks were found to be the cause of inefficiency and reduced output; reducing the work week restored production.

"We cannot get more by simply lengthening the hours. Flesh and blood accumulate fatigue, which slows down nerves and brain—and output declines.

"Let us profit by experience and keep America's work week at 48 hours, so that we can maintain our production rate and the efficiency of our producing workers. They have made a record of which we may be proud."

Mr. Green wrote that last year's unparalleled production of ships, planes, tanks and other equipment of war "was accomplished on what was practically a 48-hour standard."

Burns Criticizes Senate Control Of Appointments To Federal Jobs

Washington, D.C.—Strong criticism of the bill pending before the Senate Judiciary Committee requiring Senate confirmation for all appointments to positions in the Federal Government was voiced in more was expressed by James R. Burns, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, in a radio address here over Station WINX.

"There are nearly three million civilian employes of the Government at the present time," Mr. Burns said. "Many of these are career employes who have come in at low salaries and worked up through the ranks by merit to important positions, to which they bring a substantial background of loyalty and experience. Every one of these employes who earns $4500 or better would, under this bill, be ousted from his job as of June 30, and the Senate would have to approve all appointments to the jobs thus vacated.

"There would be certainly not less than 50,000 jobs thus opened up, possibly even three times that many. The bill's language is very inclusive. It would apparently include the per diem employes in arsenals and shipyards, the effectiveness of the national handling of the war is a serious danger to the national welfare. If the Senate is going to try to fill 50,000 or more jobs, will it have time to do anything else?

"It should be pointed out that the bill affects not only employes now receiving $4500 or more, but all government employes who may hope to reach that figure some day. It would in effect destroy the merit system and the American people are practically 100 per cent for merit."